



King County

Department of
Natural Resources and Parks
Water and Land Resources Division

VOLUME FOURTEEN • NUMBER TWO • WINTER 2005

Dedicated to educating and inspiring people to protect and enhance King County's water resources.

A BYRD'S EYE VIEW OF RURAL STEWARDSHIP PLANNING

LARRY BYRD knows first-hand what it takes to build a home while protecting wetlands and other natural resources. In February, Larry bought a parcel in the Snoqualmie Valley. He then discovered that wetland protections would prevent him from building a home the way he wanted. Now enrolled in King County's Rural Stewardship Planning program, Larry is working with a county steward to create a plan that will meet both his needs and critical area protections.

"I used to be upset about the Critical Areas," Larry said. "I would encourage all rural property owners interested in looking at a property for development to get involved with King County instead of becoming adversarial. There is a lot of good to be gained by working with King County, like improved property values. The county wants to work with landowners."

Many landowners in rural King County are finding that Rural Stewardship Planning can help them achieve their goals for their property.



The program offers free technical assistance to help landowners with comprehensive planning. A plan considers natural resources like forests and wetlands, any existing structures and roads, and any planned development or improvements. Landowners write their plans in partnership with King County stewards, selecting activities or development options that protect or enhance natural habitats.

Continued on page four.

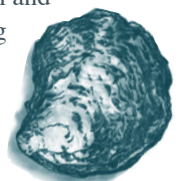


Volunteers with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund seed native oysters on Vashon Island. Photo by Morgan Rohrbach, PSRF

Mollusks amongst us

Native oysters are getting a headstart on Vashon and Maury Islands, thanks to the efforts of the Puget Sound Restoration Fund. Over the next year, 340,000 Olympia oysters will be planted on approximately three acres of tidelands across six island sites on public and private lands. The only oyster native to the Pacific Northwest, Olympia oysters have been in trouble in Puget Sound for more than 100 years. During the last century, over harvesting, pollution, and habitat loss virtually eliminated this native from our waters. Like other mollusks, Olympia oysters are filter feeders that clean the water as they feed. They also provide food

for other organisms and help create nearshore habitat, critical for juvenile salmonids and other creatures. Private landowners are key to the restoration of the Olympia oyster in its native habitat since 75% of Washington tidelands are in private ownership. The Community Salmon Fund, a partnership between King County and the National Fish and Wildlife Federation, funds restoration projects on private lands and provided funding for this effort. For more information on habitat restoration grants on private and public lands in King County, contact **Ken Pritchard** by e-mail at ken.pritchard@metrokc.gov or by phone at 206-296-8265. For more information on the Puget Sound Restoration Fund, visit www.restorationfund.org.



One Olympia oyster can filter
8-12 gallons of water a day.

Illustration courtesy of Washington Sea Grant Program.

SCHOOLS GO GREEN WITH THESE FREE PROGRAMS!

King County offers a variety of educational programs and assistance to classrooms that want to go green or simply want to learn more. Check out the following free programs:



Gail Gensler deconstructs the hazards of home

2

WINTER 2005

King County Solid Waste Division offers school programs on recycling and resource conservation for all grade levels. Visit www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/education/index.asp for details or call **Donna Miscolta** at **206-296-4477**.

Start or improve a campus recycling program. Become a "green" school by adopting and pursuing environmental goals. Visit www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/education/assistance.asp for details or call **Dale Alekel** at **206-296-8457**.

Workshops train educators to teach household hazardous waste concepts to their students. Mini-grants, classroom presentations and other follow-up assistance are available to participating teachers. Visit www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/education/hazwaste.asp for details or call **Donna Miscolta** at **206-296-4477**.

Can't attend a workshop, but still want to teach your students about the hazards of household chemicals? An interactive classroom program has students examine labels on household products, learn to identify the most hazardous, and discover safer alternatives. Contact **Gail Gensler** at **206-263-3082** or gail.gensler@metrokc.gov or visit www.govlink.org/hazwaste/schoolyouth/.



Be bright, don't ignite!

Fire season may seem a distant memory, but if you live in an area at risk for wildfires, consider these following strategies before you replace your lawn with bird-attracting, low-maintenance native plants:

- ❖ Select native plants that don't shed large amounts of fuel (needles) and have an open structure.
- ❖ Consider non-flammable landscaping rock or gravel immediately around your house as a low-maintenance landscape alternative.
- ❖ Enjoy planting your landscape with these firewise plants:
 - ❖ Trees: maples, dogwoods and oaks
 - ❖ Shrubs: vine maple, serviceberry, Oregon grape, evergreen huckleberry, and salal
 - ❖ Groundcovers: kinnikinnick, thrift, wild strawberry and yarrow
- ❖ Order the Be Firewise brochure with other fire safety tips for rural landowners in King County. Call **206-296-7820** TTY 711 or **1-800-325-6165 x67820**.

For more information about creating a safe property, visit www.firewise.org.



EAGLE SCOUT LEADS STORM DRAIN CAMPAIGN

Led by Eagle Scout **Jeff Brink**, 27 scouts stenciled over 96 storm drains on one summer morning. Scouts also handed out flyers and doorhangers to homeowners, in an effort to raise awareness about how these storm drains flow to Madsen Creek and the Cedar River. Jeff was assisted by King County staff who loaned him one of its remaining storm drain stenciling kits. While King County no longer offers a stenciling program, county residents may apply for a grant to stencil storm drains in their neighborhood. For more info, e-mail Ken.Pritchard@metrokc.gov, call him at 206-296-8265 or log onto dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/grants.htm.



SOS: Suds out of Streams!



The Renton Soccer Team is one of 15 groups who have received free car wash kits for their fundraisers

If you're thinking about a carwash fundraiser, consider applying for a free car wash kit. Keep soap and car fluids—which are toxic to fish—out of our waterways by routing wastewater to a treatment facility instead. Visit dnr.metrokc.gov/carwash and learn how to apply for a free kit.

Thousands learn about what they can do to help protect Puget Sound beaches

Final numbers are in for the seventh summer of the Beach Naturalist program: 126 wonderful Beach Naturalist volunteers made 13,247 contacts with beach visitors this summer. On top of that, extra-specially devoted Beach Naturalists also worked on a number of school days and reached 2,007 students and 412 chaperones, meaning the program reached close to 16,000 people over the entire summer.

The primary partners of the Beach Naturalist program are the Seattle Aquarium and King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks. Other sponsors include the Seattle Department of Parks & Recreation, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Puget Sound Action Team and People for Puget Sound. The Forum for WRIA 9 (the Green-Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed) provided support to the program with King Conservation District funds and the Russell Family Foundation provided grant monies to support the Beach Naturalist program in schools.



A beach naturalist shares the wonders of the beach with a young visitor. Photo by Machel Spence.

CITIZENS PLAY KEY ROLE IN PLAN FOR WATERSHED HEALTH

Everyone in the Puget Sound area talks about salmon, but what should we do locally to ensure the survival of this Pacific Northwest icon? A five year effort to develop careful answers to this question concluded this fall with the approval of a ten year plan for saving salmon habitat in the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed. The Salmon Habitat Plan recommends 77 on-the-ground restoration projects, 57 habitat protection projects, and 30 programs that together will help create a watershed healthier for both people and fish. Similar plans were completed for the Snoqualmie Watershed in 2004 and for the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed earlier in 2005.

While much of the work will be carried out by government agencies, the plan calls for continuing citizen involvement. In daily life, we who share this watershed have an impact on its health. Daily practices in our homes, yards, and with our cars are magnified by our numbers and concentrated by water. Every volunteer who picks up a shovel to control invasive weeds or plant native trees is acting for a better watershed. Visit the Web site at dnr.metrokc.gov/Wrias/9/participant.html to download the complete plan or to locate a library near you that has a copy. CD-ROMs or printed copies of the Executive Summary are also available upon request.



An A+ for Volunteer Lake Monitors!

Thanks to dedicated volunteers, the King County Volunteer Lake Monitoring program has finished another outstanding sampling season with a 98% completion rate! "Our volunteers care deeply about the water quality in their lakes and many return year after year to work with us to look for trends or changes over time," said **Sally Abella**, program manager. Volunteers completed 480 sampling trips on 41 small lakes in King County this year.

Venturing onto their lakes 12 times from May through October, volunteers took physical measurements and collected water samples that were later analyzed by King County's Environmental Laboratory. "Because of our quality control and quality assurance measures, we are confident that data from the volunteer program is very reliable," added Abella. Data collected by volunteers are used to follow long-term changes in water quality. If existing or potential problems at a particular lake are suggested, Lake Stewardship Program staff work with community members and the jurisdictional government agency to research and address the problem.

Join the A Team! Volunteers are needed for the following lakes: Holm (Neilson), Pipe, Shadow, and Walker. Learn more at dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/waterres/smlakes/index.htm or call **Sally Abella** at 206-296-8382.

3

WINTER 2005



Michael Murphy collects a water sample at Lake Langlois.



Did you know that Americans throw out 25% more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day than any other time of year? This holiday season, give experience instead of stuff and save 15 to 50 percent! For more info visit the Waste Free Holidays Web site at www.waste-freeholidays.com.

4

WINTER 2005



To report serious flooding, call 206-296-8100 or 1-800-527-6237, anytime, day or night.

Click and Save:

New Web site features discounted eco-friendly products!

Scheduled to launch in December 2005, EcoDeals.org is a new King County Solid Waste Division Web site that makes environmentally responsible shopping in King County convenient, fun and easy. EcoDeals.org will showcase products that are locally made, less hazardous to the environment, contain recycled or reused content, conserve water, or are energy efficient. Featured products will provide county residents with real savings, including coupons that can be downloaded for redemption at participating retailers. The site will also offer extensive information on product performance and resource conservation benefits. For more information call **Patti Southard** at 206-296-8480.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP CLASSES BEGIN IN JANUARY



Interested in enhancing your forested property, saving money through tax incentives and possibly earning revenue from your woodlands? Learn how in WSU King County Extension's forest stewardship class. Forest property owners and managers will learn more about King County's Forest Stewardship Program and how their property can benefit from a stewardship plan. Participants may be eligible to enroll in one of the county forest incentive programs and have property taxes reduced by up to 70%. A \$100 program fee includes materials, assistance from staff and a site visit by a King County Forester. This 8 week class begins January 17, 2006 and will be held in Carnation. To sign up, e-mail **Amy Grotta** at amy.grotta@metrokc.gov or call 206-205-3132.

A BYRD'S EYE VIEW

Continued from page one.

Some landowners wanting to develop property with critical areas use a Rural Stewardship Plan to gain some flexibility in where or how they can build. Larry gained wetland buffer reductions in exchange for a "nature-friendly driveway," tree plantings, and other protections.

The Stewardship Planning process is most successful if, like Larry, the landowner is willing to be flexible. The best time to explore whether a plan will work for you is in the early stages of a development project. Larry's advice: "do it by the numbers – there are certain steps that need to be done before you clear any trees or commit to a specific layout." Of course, if you don't plan any development and simply want to improve habitat on your property, anytime is the best time!

For more information on Rural Stewardship Plans, contact **Katy Vanderpool** at 206-296-8362 or katy.vanderpool@metrokc.gov – or visit dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/cao.



Groundwater Stars in new Animation!

Watch the King County groundwater Web page for an animation debut this December! Click on the link, and join two singing, dancing, burrowing groundhogs as they explore the ups and downs, ins and outs of groundwater. Along the way, you'll meet Huck Finn, a knight and his castle, a dinosaur and other characters. Children and adults will love the graphics as they learn about groundwater, why it is important and how to protect it. Developed by Leaping Media with funds from a King County SPLASH grant, the animation will be hosted on the King County Web site at dnr.metrokc.gov/groundwater and will be aired on local TV channels. Educators can download the animation for use as a community education tool or request a copy on VHS. Visit the Web site and help groundwater become a star attraction in King County!

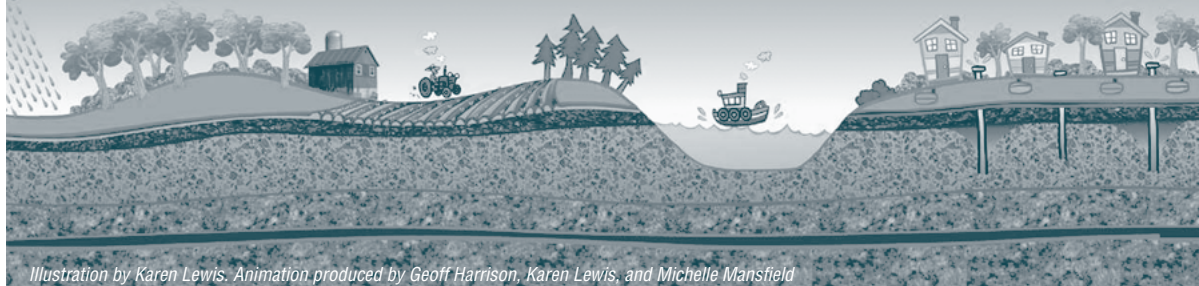


Illustration by Karen Lewis. Animation produced by Geoff Harrison, Karen Lewis, and Michelle Mansfield

Warning: Your septic system could be harming your drinking water

Have you looked at your septic system lately? Before you say, “Yuk!” consider this: Septic systems pose the second largest threat to groundwater quality in the US, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. (The first is LUST, which doesn’t stand for anything racy but for leaking underground storage tanks.)

Would you want to drink what comes out of a failing septic system?

The good news is that a properly functioning septic system does a superb job of cleaning the water, protecting both human health and the environment. The bad news, says the EPA, is that 10 to 20 percent of systems are not functioning properly. Is yours one of them?

On Hood Canal, on the west side of Puget Sound, algae blooms and fish kills have led to fishing closures. The state’s Puget Sound Action Team blames septic systems for about 60 percent of the human contribution to the problem, according to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

A failed (or improperly functioning) system could be expensive for both you and the community. About 30 percent of King County’s population relies on groundwater wells for drinking water. That’s over half a million people. If your system fails, it could cost you up to \$15,000 to replace it. And contaminated groundwater could cost the community (that means you, as a ratepayer) millions to clean up. Governor Christine Gregoire wants to spend \$5 million on the Hood Canal cleanup.

Regular maintenance will help keep your system running smoothly, just like taking care of a car or bike.

Help protect your investment in your septic system, and help keep your drinking water clean. Here are a few simple steps:

1. Be water smart. The more water you use, the harder your system needs to work and the sooner it will need to be maintained or replaced. More than 26 percent of the water used by the average family goes to flushing the toilet and more than 21 percent to washing clothes. Save money over the long run by investing in a water-saving toilet, and wash only full loads of laundry.

2. Inspect your system every one to three years. The frequency depends on the type of system and whether you use a garbage disposal. King County now requires a certified On-site System Monitor to monitor and maintain your septic system. You can get a list of certified firms from Public Health, Seattle & King County (see Web site below).

3. Keep harmful materials out of your septic tank. Here’s a list of what **NOT** to put down your tank.

Can’t decompose in tank:

- Grease
- Cooking fats
- Newspaper
- Paper towels
- Rags
- Coffee grounds
- Sanitary napkins
- Cigarettes

Can harm your tank’s functioning and pollute groundwater:

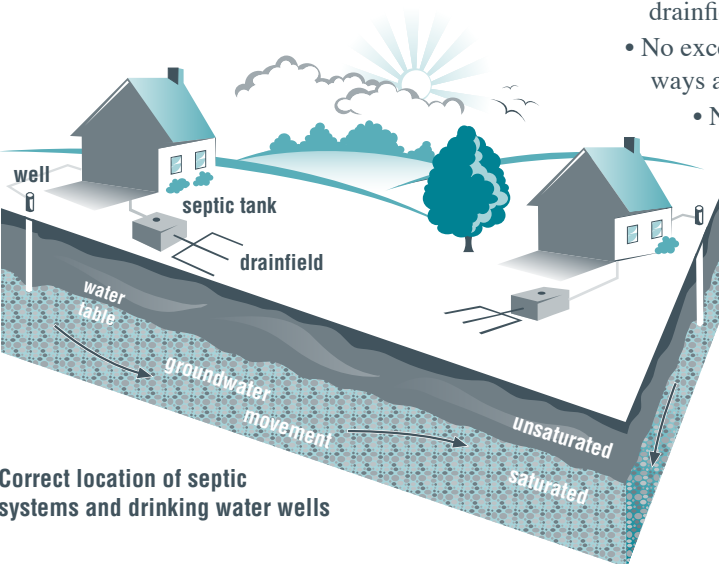
- Solvents
- Oils
- Paint
- Pesticides

Are unnecessary and don’t improve performance:

- Septic tank additives

4. Protect your system from damage. Here are some septic system “don’ts”:

- No vehicles or heavy equipment on septic tank or drainfield.
- No excess water. Divert water from roofs, driveways and patios away from septic system.
- No impermeable materials, such as plastic or concrete, over your drainfield. That means no decks or patios in that area.
- No deep-rooting plants over your drainfield. Grass is the best cover for your system.



One Hop Shopping for Federal Grants

A new Web site greatly simplifies the process that organizations must follow when applying for grants from Federal departments and agencies. Grants.Gov allows you to apply for federal grants online and keeps your application information stored in the system. For more information, visit: www.grants.gov.



For information on how to maintain your septic system and a list of septic professionals, visit www.metrokc.gov/health/wastewater/owners/index.htm or call 206-296-4600.

Illustration produced by National Small Flows Clearinghouse, West Virginia University.



©J.S. Peterson. USDA NRCS
NPDC. Regional Parks Botanic
Garden at Tilden, Berkeley, CA.
June 5, 2003

NATIVE PLANT PICK

Evergreen
Huckleberry
Vaccinium ovatum

Butterflies, birds and berries, this shrub has it all! If you haven't noticed it in the wild, you may have found it gracing flower arrangements with its glossy evergreen foliage.

Evergreen huckleberry ranges in height from 2-9 feet and does best in partially shady conditions, although it can be found in full sun to full shade. Small urn shaped flowers keep butterflies coming. In the fall, edible berries provide food for wildlife and the hungry gardener.

Used near the back of a perennial bed, evergreen huckleberry's foliage provides a nice backdrop for showing off your colorful plants. This versatile shrub also handles pruning well. Whether your garden displays a formal appearance or a wild side, evergreen huckleberry has a place in your yard and is readily available at many area nurseries. Learn more about this and other native plants at dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/Go-Native/index.htm.

Get healthy soil on the windfall diet

What will you do with your windfall of leaves? This free and versatile organic ingredient can be mowed, chopped, raked, piled, or composted. Healthy soil starts with a diet of organic material and leaf mold feeds the microorganisms that keep soil fertile. Sprinkle leaves over garden beds, mulch mow into lawns, or use them as a stimulating garnish for the compost pile.

Use this vital ingredient to build and protect soil all winter and take the rest of the season off!

6

WINTER 2005

EASY LEAF RECIPES

MULCH MOW LEAVES where they fall and if they are not smothering the grass, let them break down on the lawn. Finely chopped leaves will not promote thatch in our cool weather grasses. Mowing also chops leaves for compost piles or for finer mulch.

As an easy mulch, **RAKE LEAVES** into garden beds 2-4 inches deep to cover and protect soil, around tender plants and over bulbs.

BAG LEAVES to rot over winter. Add it to summer compost, to potting soil or to sprinkle over garden beds in spring. This stimulates soil critters and keeps plants and soil healthy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION visit www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/soils or call the Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline at 206-633-0224. Learn more about soil, water and salmon at Soils for Salmon at www.compostwashington.org/soilss2.asp.

Planting a Tree from A-Z

On January 21, learn how to choose the right tree for the right spot, order and handle tree seedlings, plant them correctly, and care for them until they are established. This workshop includes a hands-on opportunity to practice your new skills in the forest. For more information e-mail amy.grotta@metrokc.gov or call 206-205-3132.



Siga los salmones en el Rio Cedar!

Thirty-eight dedicated and enthusiastic volunteer naturalists turned out on four October weekend days this fall for the Cedar River Naturalist Program's 8th season. Naturalists spoke with an average of 600 visitors per day. New this year was a Spanish language program. Four veteran naturalists offered their Spanish language skills to help King County and its partners reach a broader audience about the importance of the Cedar River and the salmon that

depend on it. Both Spanish and English speaking naturalists spoke to visitors about the salmon journey that takes place every fall as salmon swim from the ocean to the Cedar River to spawn. Volunteers also translated hand-outs so that visitors could bring home tips on things they can do at home to help salmon. Program partners are the Seattle Aquarium, Seattle Public Utilities, King County's



Visitors learn about the Cedar River.

Department of Natural Resources and Parks, the City of Renton, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Understanding Trees Up & Down

During our windy northwest winters, trees don't always stay put, which can raise concerns for homeowners. Susceptible or diseased trees that could fall on property or people, often known as "hazard trees," can be dealt with in advance. Yet, as we know, healthy trees can also blow down at the whim of the wind. For a lot of good reasons, including water quality, water storage, and wildlife habitat, don't move trees unless you have to.

If a tree falls in the woods...do you need a permit to move it?

If you must remove a tree, check to make sure no permits are required from the **King County Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES)** and/or other local, state or federal agencies. If a diseased or downed tree threatens safety or structures, you may remove it without a permit as long as you report the removal to DDES immediately. Note that if a tree falls into a lake it is considered habitat; removing habitat requires a Hydraulic Project Application Permit from the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

DDES addresses each situation individually; there is no blanket rule for dealing with trees at risk of falling. Contact DDES before removing any tree in a

sensitive area. Additional information about DDES permitting or sensitive area regulations is available at www.metrokc.gov/ddes/ or by calling **206-296-6600**.

Trees can be down but not out...snag 'em

Is the damaged or downed tree out of the way? Not threatening structures or safety? Snapped off eight or more feet above the ground but otherwise sound? Partially submerged in a lake or stream? If it is, consider leaving it for the many wildlife species that thrive in dead and dying trees. Pileated woodpeckers, wood ducks, hooded mergansers and chickadees nest in cavities of dead trees, known as "snags." Kingfishers, eagles and osprey search for fish from branches overhanging the water, while juvenile salmon and trout hide in tangled underwater branches. Bats roost under loose bark on decaying snags, then leave at night to eat mosquitoes and other pesky insects. Once decay starts, wood-boring insects move in and attract many other species who feed on them.

If you're game for leaving your downed tree to benefit wildlife, you may want to work with a tree service experienced with wildlife trees. To locate a company near you, contact the **Plant Amnesty** referral service at **206-783-9813** or go to: www.plantamnesty.org.



7

WINTER 2005

HOW TO ASSESS TREE RISK:

If you're concerned about a tree that may pose a threat to people and property, check for the following signs:

- **Dead or dying, poorly attached limbs.**
- **Leaning trees or cracks in soil** that indicate root movement.
- **Old wounds and obvious signs of decay** (fungal conks; hollow trunks).
- **Shortened height growth or sudden large crop of cones** (often indicates root disease).
- **Signs of root damage** (including compaction, pavement, or fill over the root zone).
- **Yellowing, reddening or thinning foliage.** Note: Some discoloration and loss of older foliage is normal. Most conifers have some foliage near the interior branches that turns yellow or reddish and drops from the tree each fall. This may be more pronounced in drought years and may be very noticeable in pines and cedars.

If the problem is confined to a single branch, corrective pruning may solve the problem. If all or most of the tree is affected, removal may be necessary. Trees that exhibit symptoms of overall decline can rarely be saved. If you think your tree is at risk for failure, call a qualified professional. For more information, call the **Forest Health Program** at **360-902-1300**, e-mail forest_health@wadnr.gov or ask a certified arborist.

Information provided by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and the *Lake Steward* newsletter.

RADICAL SALMON

Innovations in Salmon Restoration Design

King County and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation are sponsoring a Radical Salmon Competition this winter to identify and field-test promising new techniques for salmon habitat restoration. Four winners will receive up to \$5,000 in design funds and will have two months to complete their designs for consideration for the grand prize. A panel of judges will award the top design up to \$65,000 in implementation funds, plus \$5,000 for additional design costs. For proposal guidelines, please contact **Nick Pearson** at Evergreen Funding Consultants at **206-691-0700**, npearson@evergreenfc.com or **Ken Pritchard** at King County at **206-296-8265**, ken.pritchard@metrokc.gov. Proposals are due January 15, 2005.





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Please let us know. Visit our Web site at dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/mailling.htm or call us at **206-296-6519** or send your labels, with the correct address clearly marked, to: King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Water and Land Resources Division
Attn: Front Desk/Reception
201 South Jackson Street, Suite 600, Seattle, WA 98104
Please allow 6–8 weeks for changes.



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Extend your Knowledge

This winter, check out the free educational series offered by WSU King County Extension to King County residents.

Winter topics include:

- Cross Fencing
- Saving for a Rainy Day: Rain Barrels
- Just Say No to Weed & Feed: Non-Chemical Lawn Care
- Do You Know Where Your Food Comes From? Eating Locally In a Global Economy.

To register for classes or find out more, call **Darcy Batura** at **206-205-3130**, e-mail darcy.batura@metrokc.gov or visit www.metrokc.gov/wsucce and click on "Extension Education Events."

Additional Educational Resources

EPA launches water Web page for kids

Games, activities and animated classroom experiments will entertain (and educate!) kids of all ages and their teachers who visit EPA's new EPA KIDS Page. Find out more at www.epa.gov/safewater/kids/index.html.

Looking for projects for your Girl Scouts?

Check out "Linking Girls to the Land", a new resource guide that provides step-by-step guidelines for doing environmental projects. Find out more at www.epa.gov/linkinggirls.

Spotlight on local native environmental ethics and traditions

Available on short term loan from the EPA's Public Environmental Resource Center, *Teachings of the Tree People* is a documentary that highlights the oral traditions and environmental ethics of the Puget Sound Coast Salish People. Call the EPA at **206-553-1200** or **1-800-424-4372** to borrow the film.

About the DOWNSTREAM NEWS

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and ask for Water and Land Resources

E-mail: charlotte.spang@metrokc.gov

Web page: dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr. Online version:
dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/downstream-news.htm.

8

WINTER 2005



Report
illegal
dumping
into storm
drains
or roadside
ditches to the
**Water Quality
Complaint Line** at
206-296-1900.